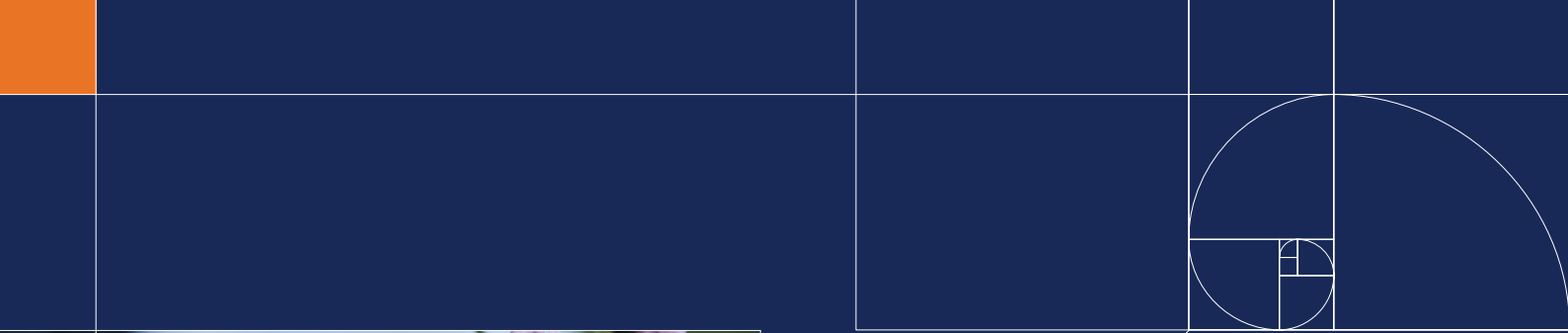




# WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre

Annual report 2025



World Health  
Organization

Global Traditional  
Medicine Centre



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Annual report 2025

WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre: annual report 2025

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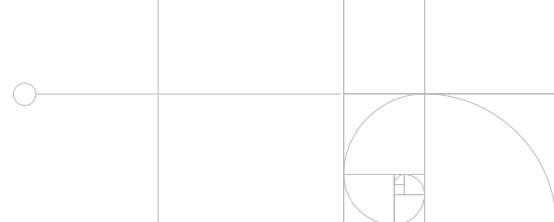
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Students at Thammasat University Hospital in Bangkok, Thailand conduct experiments in a laboratory. The facility trains future healthcare professionals in both biomedicine and traditional medicine techniques as part of its integrative education programme.  
© WHO/Harrison Thane

# Foreword

The year 2025 marked a pivotal moment for traditional medicine\* within global health. Member States and partners have reaffirmed that traditional medicine is essential to achieving universal health coverage and promoting inclusive and sustainable development. The adoption of the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034 (1)* at the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly was fundamental to this. This progress was strengthened by the convening of the second World Health Organization (WHO) Global Summit on Traditional Medicine.

The global strategy reflects a consensus that the widespread use of traditional medicine must be matched by stronger evidence, norms, standards and regulation; appropriate integration within health systems; and inclusive cross-sectoral partnership and community engagement to achieve shared global goals. These goals include ensuring equitable benefit-sharing and stewardship of natural resources on which many traditional medicine practices depend.

Against this backdrop, 2025 was both a culmination and a new beginning. It marked the transition from agenda-setting and strategy to implementation and impact, requiring renewed leadership, cooperation and investment. As part of the extensive WHO prioritization effort in 2025, the consolidation of WHO's traditional medicine portfolios into a unified WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre strengthened WHO's ability to deliver on its mandate. Importantly, this includes reducing fragmentation, improving cost-efficiency and aligning research, integration, innovation, partnerships and sustainability within a coherent value chain approach.

This 2025 annual report reflects a year of strategy, solidarity and scaling up. The Global Traditional Medicine Centre and partners are laying the scientific, normative, institutional and partnership foundations needed to implement the global strategy at scale. It also looks ahead, highlighting priorities for the coming period as WHO and its Member States work together to translate global commitments into measurable improvements in health, well-being and sustainability for communities worldwide.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Shyama Kuruvilla".

**Dr Shyama Kuruvilla**

Director a.i., WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre



# Acknowledgements

The core development team at the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre includes Lori McDougall, Sungchol Kim, Geetha Krishnan Gopalakrishna Pillai, Catalin Costin Iacobescu and Maki Kajiware, under the guidance of Shyama Kuruvilla (Director a.i.).

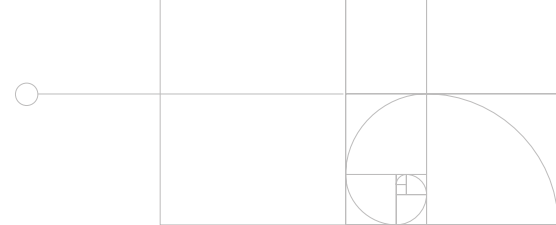
The following WHO staff and consultants contributed to this report: Adi Al-Nuseirat (WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean), Ernesto Bascolo (WHO Regional Office for the Americas), Annie Chu (WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific), Ibadat Dhillon (WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia), Philippe Doo-Kingue (WHO Regional Office for Africa), James Fitzgerald (WHO Regional Office for the Americas), Rasmus Gjesing (WHO Regional Office for Europe), Pawan Kumar Godatwar (WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia), Eunkyung Han (WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific), Mohamed Ismail (WHO Regional Office for Africa), Manoj Jhalani (WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia), Luis Fernando Jimenez Abello (WHO Regional Office for Africa), Shogo Kubota (WHO Regional Office for

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# Abbreviations



|             |                                                                                               |
|-------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AI          | artificial intelligence                                                                       |
| BIREME      | Latin American and Caribbean Center on Health Sciences Information                            |
| H2I         | Health Heritage Innovations                                                                   |
| ICD-11      | International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision                                        |
| ICHI        | International Classification of Health Interventions                                          |
| IRCH        | WHO International Regulatory Cooperation for Herbal Medicines                                 |
| ITU         | International Telecommunication Union                                                         |
| MDS-TM-RHIS | WHO Minimum Data Set for Traditional Medicine                                                 |
| REACT       | Regional Expert Advisory Committee on Traditional Medicine                                    |
| TCIM        | traditional, complementary and integrative medicine                                           |
| TEN         | Technical Expert Network                                                                      |
| TM          | traditional medicine*                                                                         |
| SMART       | specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound                                     |
| STAG-TM     | Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine |
| UN          | United Nations                                                                                |
| WHO         | World Health Organization                                                                     |
| WIPO        | World Intellectual Property Organization                                                      |

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\* The term traditional medicine is used to encompass all of the following:

**Traditional medicine:** codified or non-codified systems for healthcare and well-being, comprising practices, skills, knowledge and philosophies originating in different historical and cultural contexts, which are distinct from and pre-date biomedicine, evolving with science for current use from an experience-based origin. Traditional medicine emphasizes nature-based remedies and holistic, personalized approaches to restore balance of mind, body and environment.

**Complementary medicine:** additional healthcare practices that are not part of a country's mainstream medicine. Evidence-based complementary medicine has the potential to support mainstream medicine and more comprehensively support people's health and well-being needs.

**Integrative medicine:** an interdisciplinary and evidence-based approach to health and well-being by using a combination of biomedical and traditional and/or complementary medical knowledge, skills and practices.



An ayurvedic healer preparing traditional medicine in Sri Lanka. © WHO/Thilo Hub

# Introduction and organizational context

## WHO prioritization in 2025

In 2025, World Health Organization (WHO) leadership reaffirmed traditional medicine as a strategic priority within the Organization's broader transformation agenda. As emphasized by the Director-General in his remarks to the WHO Programme, Budget and Administration Committee 2026, WHO's focus has shifted decisively towards partnership, delivery, impact and shared accountability.

Traditional medicine is used by billions worldwide. It is recognized as an essential component of resilient, people-centred and sustainable health systems. This is especially true in the context of primary healthcare, noncommunicable diseases, ageing populations and planetary health. The adoption of the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034 (1)* at the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly in May 2025 (2) anchored this prioritization in a formal global mandate. The strategy provides a unifying framework to guide WHO's work and support Member States and partners in ensuring that traditional medicine is safe, effective, evidence-informed, equitable and appropriately integrated.



*"This is a moment of change not only for WHO, but for the entire global health ecosystem."*

*There are now many discussions on reforming that ecosystem to ensure all partners leverage their comparative advantage, avoid overlaps and duplication and that together we deliver value and results for the countries we serve."*

**– Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,**

WHO Director-General at the WHO Programme, Budget and Administration Committee 2026

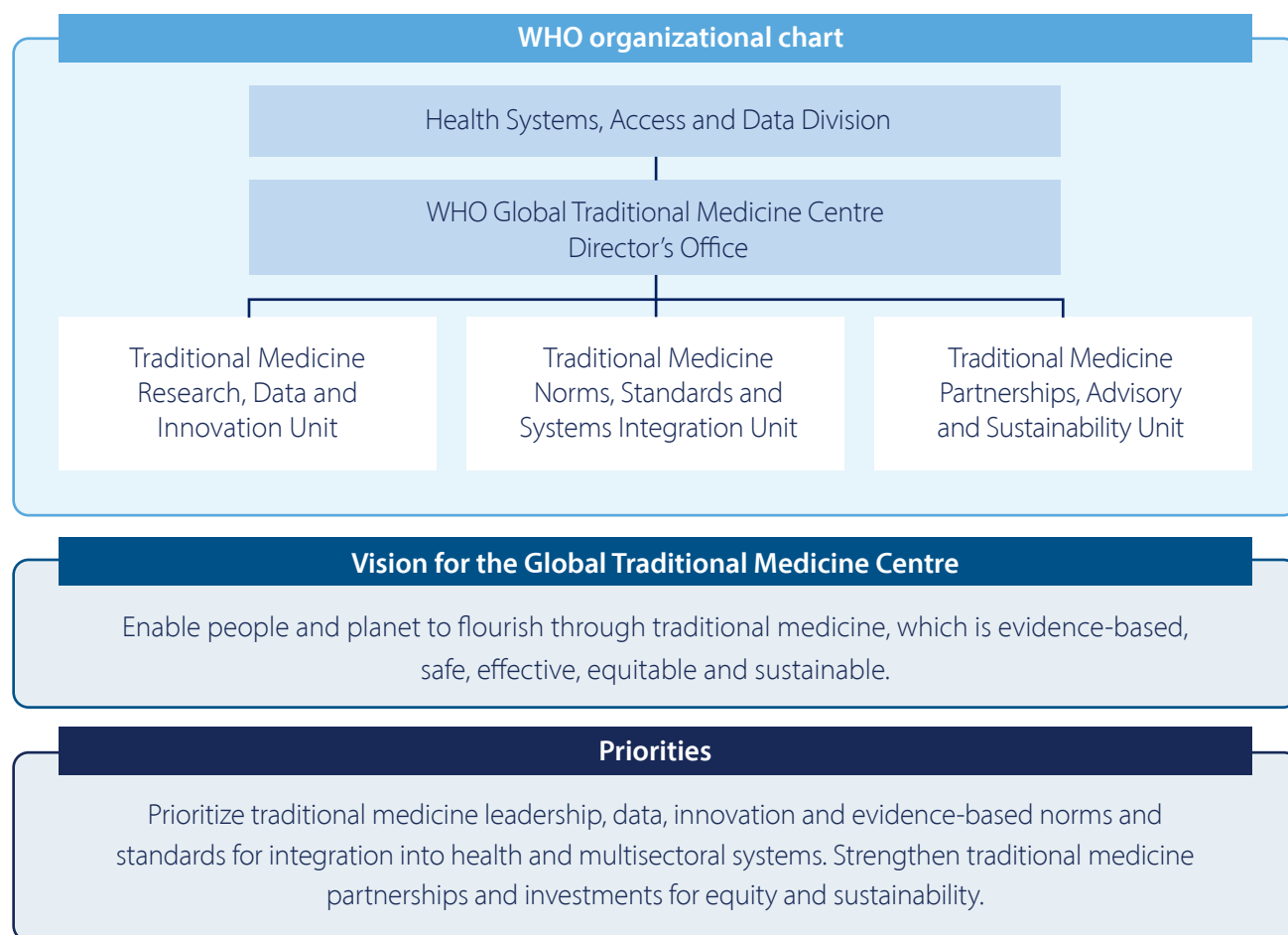


## Merger and transformation of the Global Traditional Medicine Centre

As part of the WHO-wide prioritization effort in 2025, WHO's global traditional medicine functions were consolidated. The WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre based in Jamnagar, India, and the WHO Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine Unit based in Geneva, Switzerland, were merged into a single unified centre under the Global Traditional Medicine Centre umbrella. This merger established a coherent vision, mission, organizational structure and theory of change.

The renewed Global Traditional Medicine Centre vision is to enable people and planet to flourish through traditional medicine that is evidence-based, safe, effective, equitable and sustainable. The Centre's mission is to support countries and partners in implementing the global strategy through a unified WHO approach that strengthens research, data, norms and standards, systems integration, innovation, partnerships and sustainability. The new structure is designed to reduce fragmentation, clarify accountabilities and strengthen delivery across the traditional medicine value chain.





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*The Global Traditional Medicine Centre “works to bridge ancient wisdom and modern science by advancing research, innovation, standards and data”.*

**– Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,**

WHO Director-General at the 3rd World Congress on Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine

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## Implementation in 2025

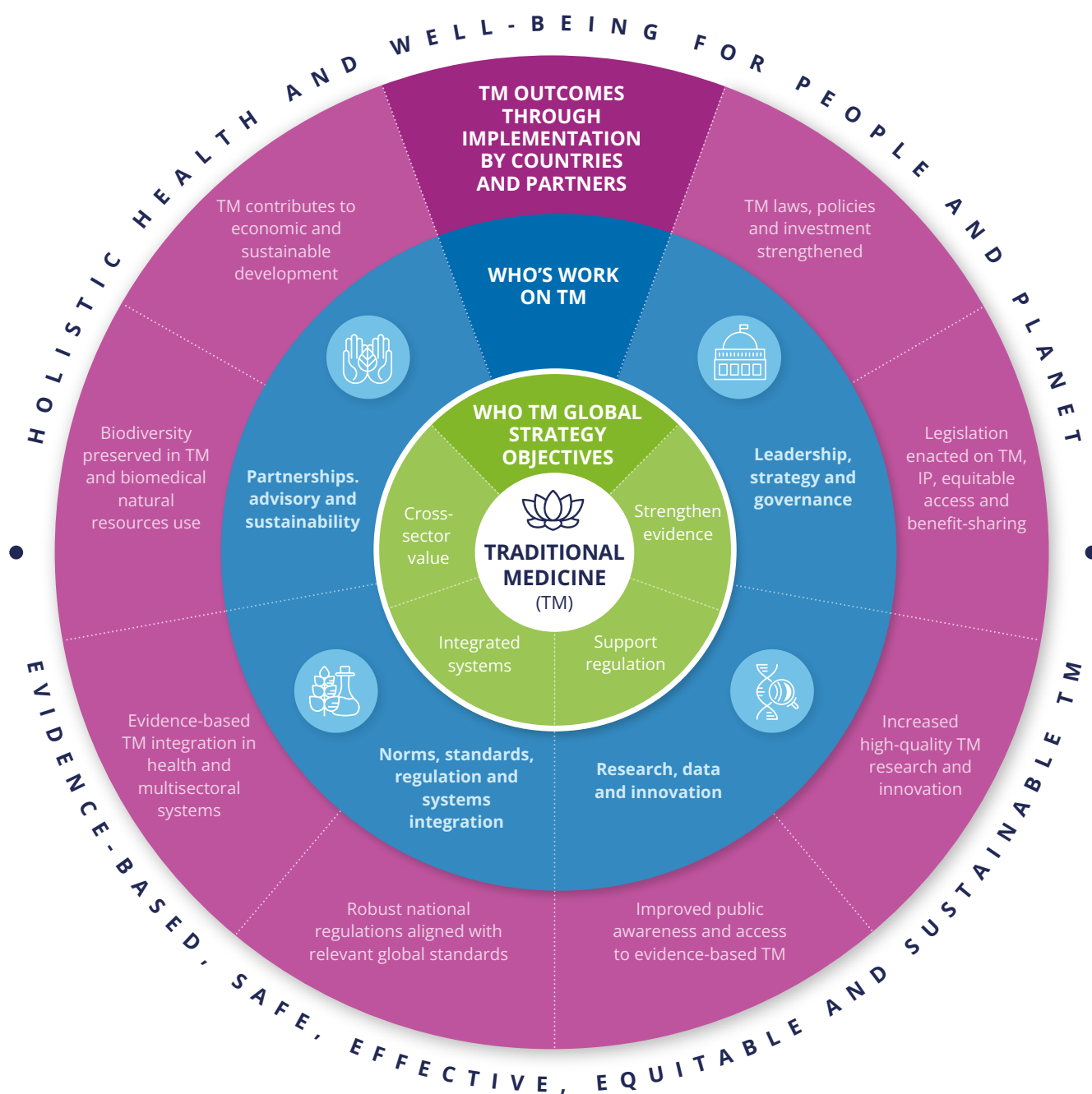
Implementation in 2025 was shaped by both delivery and transition. Alongside major technical outputs, the Global Traditional Medicine Centre strengthened leadership, coordination and organizational foundations to enable sustained implementation of the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034 (1)*.

Delivery was organized through four complementary pillars within the Centre: the Director's Office; the Traditional Medicine Research, Data and Innovation Unit; the Traditional Medicine Norms, Standards, Regulation and Systems Integration Unit; and the Traditional Medicine Partnerships, Advisory and Sustainability Unit.

## Global Traditional Medicine Centre theory of change

The Global Traditional Medicine Centre facilitates change by WHO Member States and partners for progress towards WHO's vision for traditional medicine. Its work centres around a series of guiding principles drawn from the *Global traditional medicine*

*strategy 2025–2034 (1)*, which form the foundation for WHO's traditional medicine strategic objectives, which in turn inform the Centre's programme of work, as shown in this theory of change.





A patient receives a therapeutic oil massage during a *hijama* (cupping) session in Türkiye.  
© WHO/Can Kocak

## One WHO collaboration

Across all four Global Traditional Medicine Centre pillars, implementation in 2025 was underpinned by a One WHO approach across headquarters and regional and country levels. Traditional medicine priorities were increasingly integrated within broader WHO technical agendas, including primary healthcare, health systems strengthening, digital health, One Health, biodiversity and climate.

The WHO Technical Expert Network (TEN) is supporting collaboration across headquarters, regional offices and country offices. A total of 10 meetings were held during 2025, helping to strengthen coherence, reduce duplication and enhance country relevance.

## New campus and Jamnagar development initiatives

Throughout 2025, work continued on the new WHO campus and building in Jamnagar, which is due to open in 2026. The new campus is part of a comprehensive development project in Jamnagar, led by the Government of India, with transformative public–private investments and partnerships. For example, Reliance Industries, based in Jamnagar, has announced investments of over US\$ 77 billion in a series of major, interconnected investments across health, education, clean energy and digital infrastructure, establishing Jamnagar as a flagship hub

for innovation and inclusive, sustainable growth. These initiatives include building a world-class hospital, expanding educational institutions to improve access to quality healthcare and skills, and developing workforce capacities in the region. Collectively, these investments embody an integrated development model that links social infrastructure, green industrial transformation, digital inclusion, traditional medicine and health, reinforcing Jamnagar's strategic importance within India's long-term innovation and sustainable development plans.

## Communications

In 2025, the Global Traditional Medicine Centre significantly expanded its global communications reach and visibility. The Centre strengthened its digital presence through regular updates, feature stories and

multimedia content published on the *Global Traditional Medicine Centre (3)* website, which serves as the primary platform for sharing progress, news and strategic initiatives.



### 10 videos

exploring traditional medicine perspectives from around the world



### 921 traditional medicine photos

added to the WHO Multimedia Library



### 20 editorials and web stories



80 000+ web visits to tm-summit.org + the Centre's WHO website



### 1 WHO Bulletin special issue on traditional medicine



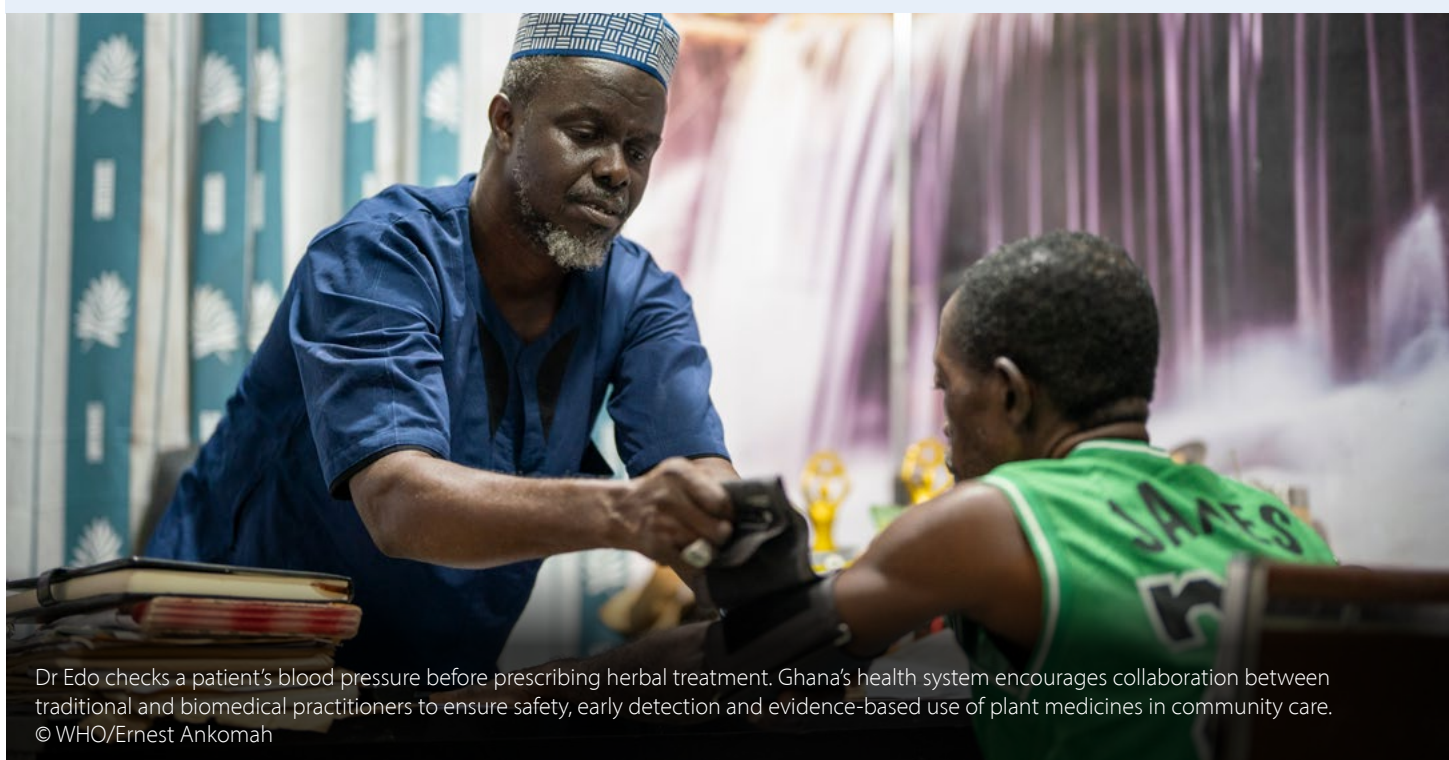
19 000 newsletter subscribers



### 4 publications



300+ media articles



Dr Edo checks a patient's blood pressure before prescribing herbal treatment. Ghana's health system encourages collaboration between traditional and biomedical practitioners to ensure safety, early detection and evidence-based use of plant medicines in community care. © WHO/Ernest Ankomah



# Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034: The foundational framework

The adoption of the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034 (1)* at the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly in 2025 provided the foundational framework for all work of the Global Traditional Medicine Centre and for WHO's engagement on traditional medicine globally. The global strategy is a shared vision for ensuring that traditional medicine is safe, effective, evidence-informed, people-centred, equitable and sustainable, while recognizing the diversity of traditions, knowledge systems and national contexts.

The global strategy responds to long-standing global mandates, including the Alma-Ata and Astana Declarations on Primary Health Care, and United Nations (UN) General Assembly commitments on universal health coverage. It also reflects contemporary challenges and opportunities, including ageing populations, the rising burden of noncommunicable diseases, antimicrobial resistance, health workforce shortages, digital transformation, biodiversity loss and climate change. By situating traditional medicine within these broader global health and sustainable development agendas, the global strategy reframes traditional medicine as a strategic contributor to resilient health systems and planetary health.

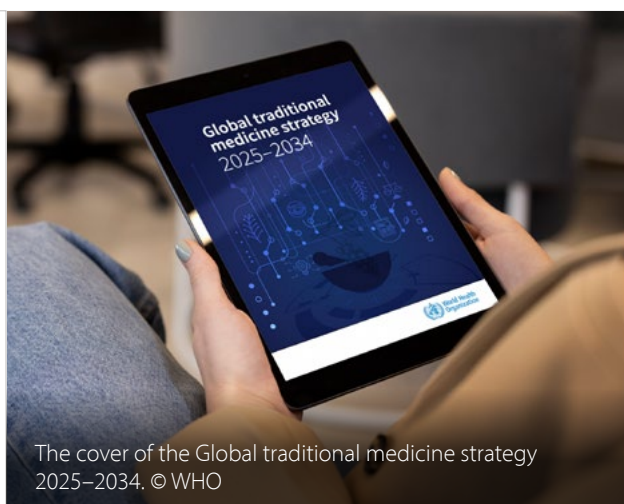
At its core, the global strategy is structured around four strategic objectives:

- strengthening evidence and knowledge through research, data and innovation;
- enhancing safety and quality through appropriate regulation of traditional medicine products, practices and practitioners;
- supporting appropriate integration of traditional medicine into health systems and universal health coverage; and
- fostering partnerships, sustainability, equity and global cooperation.

These objectives provided the organizing logic for WHO's technical work, partnerships and investments in 2025.

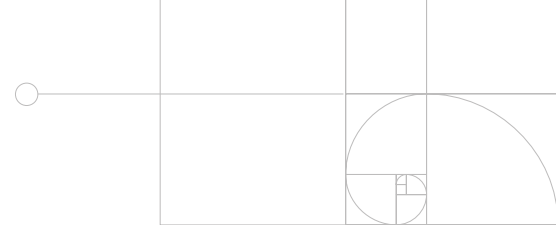
For the Global Traditional Medicine Centre, the global strategy serves as both a mandate and a roadmap. It has guided the Centre's organizational design, prioritization of deliverables and their sequencing across the traditional medicine value chain, and engagement with Member States and partners. It provides a common reference point for aligning diverse stakeholders, from researchers and regulators to Indigenous knowledge holders, practitioners and investors.

Importantly, the global strategy marked a shift from agenda-setting to implementation. While adoption in 2025 represented a major milestone, it also underscored the need for practical tools, country support, monitoring and accountability mechanisms, and sustained financing. The work of the Global Traditional Medicine Centre in 2025, therefore, focused on laying the technical, institutional and partnership foundations required for effective implementation during the 2026–2034 period.



The cover of the Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034. © WHO

## Strategy summary at a glance



### Vision

**A world in which there is universal access to safe, effective and people-centred TCIM for the health and well-being of all.**

### Goal

**To advance the contribution of evidence-based TCIM to the highest attainable standard of health and well-being.**

### Guiding principles

- Evidence-based
- Holism and health
- Sustainability and biodiversity
- The right to health and autonomy
- Indigenous Peoples' rights
- Culture and health
- People-centred care and community engagement
- Integrated health services
- Health equity

#### Strategic objective 1

**Strengthen the evidence base for TCIM**

##### Direction 1.1

Facilitate high-quality TCIM research through increased resource allocation

##### Direction 1.2

Explore relevant research approaches and optimize the utilization of technological advancements

#### Strategic objective 2

**Support the provision of safe and effective TCIM through appropriate regulatory mechanisms**

##### Direction 2.1

Provide appropriate regulatory mechanisms for TCIM products that are sustainably produced and supplied

##### Direction 2.2

Provide appropriate regulatory mechanisms for TCIM practice and practitioners

#### Strategic objective 3

**Integrate safe and effective TCIM into health systems**

##### Direction 3.1

Incorporate safe and effective TCIM services into national and local health-related frameworks and policies for the integration of safe and effective TCIM into health systems

##### Direction 3.2

Facilitate the integration of safe and effective TCIM services across the care continuum and life course

#### Strategic objective 4

**Optimize the cross-sector value of TCIM and empower communities**

##### Direction 4.1

Include TCIM in cross-sector policies and action plans for health, well-being societies, One Health and Sustainable Development Goals

##### Direction 4.2

Develop inclusive approaches and models for the protection of and access to traditional medical knowledge, and for the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of such knowledge and/or associated genetic resources

TCIM: Traditional, complementary and integrative medicine

# Results

## Director's Office: Leadership, strategy and governance

In 2025, the Director's Office played a central role in translating the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034 (1)* into an operationally coherent and delivery-oriented programme to support Member States and partners with its implementation and impact. Key areas of work included strategic leadership, organizational alignment, governance, political engagement and operational readiness.

**Strategic leadership and coordination** focused on aligning all work on traditional medicine across WHO with the newly adopted global strategy. This included clarifying priorities, sequencing deliverables across the value chain, and ensuring coherence between research, norms and standards, integration, partnerships and innovation. The Director's Office provided overall technical coordination through internal management structures and the WHO three-level TEN, strengthening collaboration across headquarters, regional offices and country offices.

**Governance and political engagement** were a major focus in 2025. The Director's Office led the preparation and engagement for WHO governing bodies, including the Executive Board and the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly, culminating in the formal adoption of the global strategy. Political engagement extended to high-level global forums, including the G20 and UN processes, positioning traditional medicine within broader agendas on universal health coverage, sustainable development, biodiversity and planetary health.

### **Summit leadership and global convening**

represented a defining achievement of the year. The Director's Office provided overall stewardship of the second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine, ensuring alignment with the global strategy, coherence across technical tracks and integration of political, technical and partnership dimensions. This included coordination of the Ministerial Roundtable at the Summit and support for the commitments made by Member States, linking the Summit outcomes to a post-2025 implementation programme for WHO.

### **Organizational transformation and merger implementation**

were key milestones in 2025. The Director's Office led the consolidation of traditional medicine portfolios into a unified centre, including developing a renewed vision, mission, theory of change and organizational structure. Emphasis was placed on reducing fragmentation, clarifying roles and accountabilities, and strengthening delivery capacity while managing transition risks and staff engagement.

### **Management, operations and risk management**

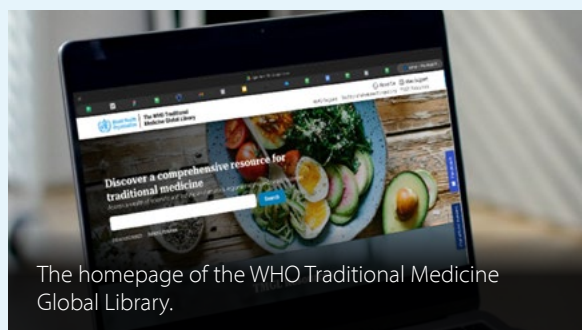
were strengthened to support scale-up. The Director's Office oversaw budget planning and execution, resource mobilization, donor reporting, procurement, operational compliance and enterprise risk management. Particular attention was given to enabling globally connected ways of working across Jamnagar, Geneva, regional offices and country offices, including governance arrangements, digital collaboration platforms and security protocols.

## Traditional Medicine Research, Data and Innovation Unit

In 2025, the Traditional Medicine Research, Data and Innovation Unit consolidated its role as the scientific and evidence engine of WHO's traditional medicine work. In 2025, the Unit focused on strengthening the quality, relevance and accessibility of evidence, advancing standardized data systems and enabling innovation-to-impact pathways aligned with public health priorities.

### Global knowledge and evidence access

advanced significantly with the launch of the WHO Traditional Medicine Global Library (4). It is the world's most comprehensive digital repository for traditional medicine, with content for every WHO Member State. Developed in collaboration with regional partners, the Library is a unified digital gateway to more than 1.6 million publications, addressing long-standing fragmentation and inequities in access to traditional medicine knowledge. The platform launch positioned WHO as a global convener for evidence-informed traditional medicine policy and practice.



The homepage of the WHO Traditional Medicine Global Library.

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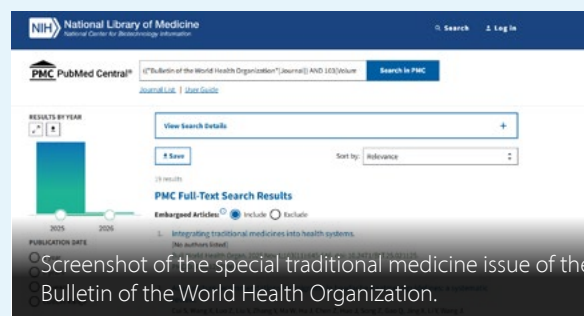
*"This global platform will help transmit the collective wisdom of humanity to future generations."*

– **H.E. Narendra Modi**,  
Prime Minister of India,  
at the 2025 G20 Summit

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**Research prioritization and methods** were strengthened through the development of the Global Traditional Medicine Research Priorities and Global Roadmap 2025–2034. Through a global Delphi process and regional consultations, the roadmap aligned experts and institutions around shared priorities grounded in disease burden, policy relevance, patient and practitioner value, and cultural and social context. Complementary work reviewed over 1700 traditional medicine research projects, validating methodological pluralism and bridging the gap between biomedical and traditional knowledge systems.

**Flagship scientific dissemination** was achieved through WHO's technical leadership of a special traditional medicine issue of the *Bulletin of the World Health Organization* (5). The issue elevated high-quality evidence on regulation, rights, financing and digital health, bringing traditional medicine into mainstream global health academic and policy debate.

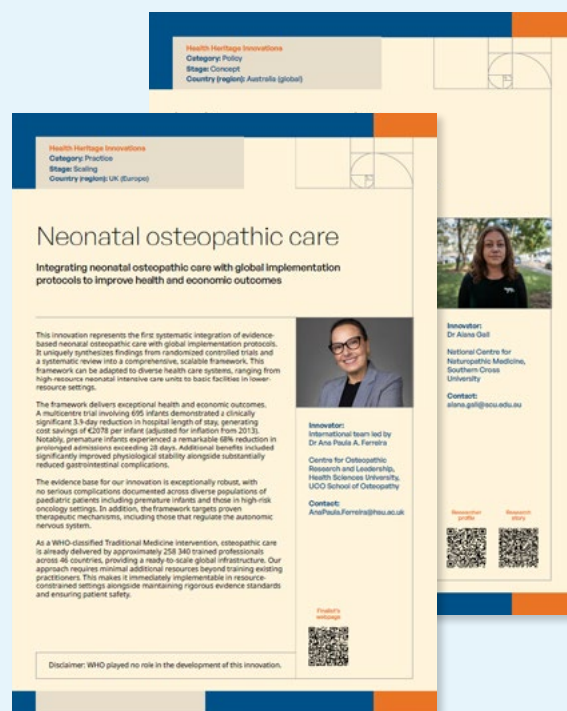


Screenshot of the special traditional medicine issue of the Bulletin of the World Health Organization.

### Health information systems and data integration

progressed through pioneering pilots integrating traditional medicine into International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision (ICD-11)-based national health information systems. The WHO Minimum Data Set for Traditional Medicine (MDS-TM-RHIS) pilot demonstrated the feasibility of generating standardized utilization data, creating a blueprint for inclusion of traditional medicine in universal health coverage planning. Parallel work initiated the first WHO-led efforts to track traditional medicine expenditure using national health accounts methodologies, laying the foundations for improved visibility of financing flows.

**Innovation and digital health** were advanced through the Health Heritage Innovations (H2I) initiative. Over 1000 submissions were screened and the open call established a pipeline of investment-ready innovative traditional medicine products, services and policies. The Unit also advanced work on digital applications, artificial intelligence (AI) ethics and governance for traditional medicine, with the development of an online course and the joint publication between WHO, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), *Mapping the application of artificial intelligence in traditional medicine: technical brief* (6), examining the use and future potential of AI in traditional medicine. The Unit is leading the Evidence-Informed Traditional Medicine Choices initiative to improve health literacy and communication.



Two posters highlighting innovations from the H2I initiative.

**Indigenous knowledge, biodiversity and sustainability** remained central pillars of the Unit's work in 2025. WHO convened global dialogues and technical processes bringing together Indigenous knowledge holders, policymakers and UN partners to advance a rights-based agenda grounded in international frameworks on Indigenous Peoples' rights, biodiversity conservation and equitable benefit-sharing. This work positioned traditional medicine at the nexus of health, culture, ecosystems and planetary health, reinforcing its contribution to sustainable and resilient health systems.

The two-day Ottawa Dialogue on Traditional Knowledge, Biodiversity and Health: Restoring Trust, Strengthening Partnerships, and Advancing Indigenous-Led Pathways (7) was held in October at the

University of Ottawa, Canada. It was hosted by WHO in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples' Centre for Documentation, Research and Information (Docip), the Ārramāṭ Project and Tinhinan Canada Association. The event marked a key step in co-developing WHO's forthcoming Framework on Indigenous Knowledge, Biodiversity and Health, coordinated through the Global Traditional Medicine Centre and the WHO Environment, Climate Change and One Health Department.



# Traditional Medicine Norms, Standards, Regulation and Systems Integration Unit

The Norms, Standards and Systems Integration Unit focused on providing the normative and regulatory foundations for safe, effective and people-centred integration of traditional medicine in health systems.

**The Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034** (1) was the central normative achievement in 2025. Global Traditional Medicine Centre staff conducted evidence reviews, convened Member State and stakeholder consultations, and developed draft documents to facilitate consensus development on the global strategy. The Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly adopted the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034* (1). The global strategy and its objectives are described in an earlier section of this annual report.

**Global monitoring and data for accountability** were strengthened through completion of the third global survey on traditional medicine and publication of the *WHO global report on traditional, complementary and integrative medicine 2024* (8). The launch of interactive global and country dashboards transformed static survey data into a living monitoring platform. WHO also published the global reference list of traditional medicine indicators for health systems performance, enabling standardized monitoring aligned with universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals.



Cover page of the *WHO global report on traditional, complementary and integrative medicine 2024*.

**Regulatory cooperation and quality assurance** advanced through WHO's leadership of the International Regulatory Cooperation for Herbal Medicines (IRCH) network. Through IRCH, national regulatory authorities strengthened information exchange, mutual learning and convergence on quality, safety and pharmacovigilance, addressing persistent regulatory capacity gaps.

**Integration into health systems** was supported through the publication of the *Integration of traditional, complementary and integrative medicine into health systems: conceptual framework* (9). The framework provides countries with practical models and tools to define and strengthen integration in ways tailored to national contexts, linked to the six building blocks of health systems.



Cover page of the *Integration of traditional, complementary and integrative medicine into health systems: conceptual framework* report.

**Country capacity-building** was delivered through interregional training workshops, translating WHO norms, standards and monitoring tools into hands-on learning and peer exchange. These workshops strengthened national capacity in regulation, quality assurance, monitoring and integration.



WHO's Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine (STAG-TM). © WHO

## Traditional Medicine Partnerships, Advisory and Sustainability Unit

The Partnerships, Advisory and Sustainability Unit advanced a systems-level approach linking traditional medicine with governance, equity, sustainability and investment. In 2025, the Unit played a central role in strengthening WHO's convening power, advisory mechanisms and global partnerships, while reframing traditional medicine as a strategic asset for improving health for all through universal health coverage.

**Global partnership and advocacy** were strengthened through the coordination of the design and delivery of the second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine, 17–19 December 2025 in New Delhi, India (see page 13). The Summit was designed as an in-person event as well as an interactive virtual event, enabling real-time participation among governments, Indigenous leaders, researchers, practitioners, regulators, investors and civil society from more than 100 countries. The Traditional Medicine Discovery Experience at the Summit was introduced as an interactive and engaging model for a permanent museum in Jamnagar, Gujarat, adjacent to the new Global Traditional Medicine Centre campus. Post-event analysis indicated significant reach and visibility, with more than 21 000 online registrations, 77 000 website visits and 2.45 million social media impressions.

The Summit was preceded by a robust roadmap of events to drive participation and support for Summit goals throughout 2025. These included dedicated panel discussions at the World Health Summit regional and global meetings (April and October), two meetings of the Group of Friends of Traditional Medicine in Geneva

(May, October), an official side event at the World Health Assembly (May), a pre-Summit Member State briefing in Geneva (November), a meeting of Ambassadors in New Delhi (November) and press events in Geneva and New Delhi (December).

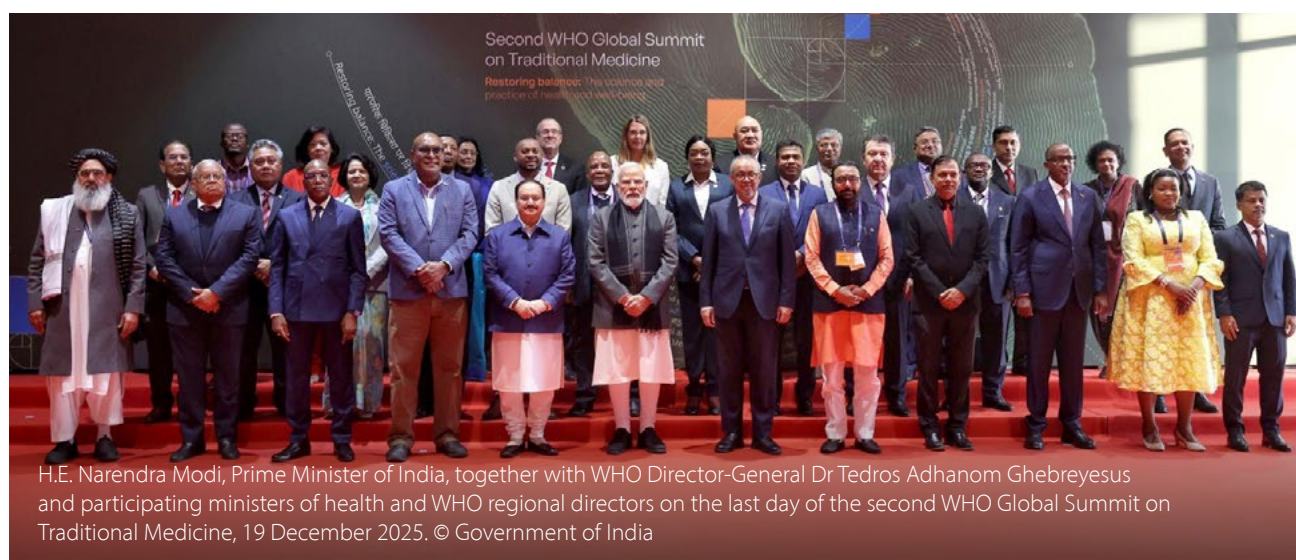
**Strategic advisory capacities** were supported through the launch of WHO's first Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine (STAG-TM) (10) in December 2025. Established through an open and transparent global process, STAG-TM, chaired by Dr Susan Wieland, Director of Cochrane Complementary Medicine, and Professor Martins Emeje, Director of the Nigeria Natural Medicine Development Agency, brings together 19 independent experts with diverse disciplinary, geographical and gender representation. The Group provides WHO with high-level strategic, scientific and technical advice on traditional medicine, including research priorities, norms and standards, regulation and integration into health systems. The establishment of STAG-TM marked a milestone in institutionalizing evidence-informed governance for traditional medicine within WHO, strengthening credibility, coherence and accountability.

**Investment and sustainable financing** were advanced through initial mapping of the global traditional medicine investment landscape and alignment of innovation pipelines with public health and equity objectives. These efforts laid the foundations to support the scale-up of safe, effective and sustainable traditional medicine solutions (see 2026 priorities).

# Second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine

The second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine (11), themed “Restoring balance: The science and practice of health and well-being”, was jointly organized by the Global Traditional Medicine Centre and the Government of India on 17–19 December 2025 in New Delhi, India. The Summit was structured around the strategic objectives of the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034* (1).

The Global Summit Steering Committee (12) was composed of 15 experts appointed by WHO, from all six WHO regions, who were tasked with providing strategic and technical advice to the Summit. The Committee was co-chaired by Dr Goh Cheng Soon, Director of the Traditional and Complementary Medicine Division, Ministry of Health, Malaysia, and Professor Motlalepula Matsabisa, a pharmacologist with research interests in the pharmacology of Traditional Medicines and medicinal plants, from the University of the Free State, South Africa. The scope of the Steering Committee included advising on technical review criteria and thematic coherence across the Summit, based on the strength of evidence and data, research methodologies, global relevance, potential impact and other considerations; advising on the development of scientific publications on issues addressed at the Summit; and preparing a report for WHO on Summit outcomes.







The WHO Traditional Medicine Discovery Experience.  
© WHO/Chris Archer and © WHO/CBAS Films

The Summit also included a Ministerial Roundtable with 25 Member States. Countries made specific investment and implementation commitments to the major goals of the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034* (1). The commitments focus on integrating traditional medicine into primary healthcare, strengthening regulation and safety standards, investing in research and building interoperable data systems to track outcomes, and advance global cooperation. It is a shift from recognition to results – ensuring traditional medicine is not a parallel system, but a driver of universal health coverage and inclusive and sustainable development.

A distinctive feature of the 2025 Summit was the Traditional Medicine Discovery Experience, an immersive exhibition that showcased traditional medicine knowledge systems, scientific advances, digital innovations and links to biodiversity and culture. Designed to form a permanent exhibit at the Global Traditional Medicine Centre's Jamnagar campus, the Discovery Experience will continue to support education, dialogue and public engagement well beyond the Summit itself.

The Summit also marked the introduction of major new contributions to research and innovation, including the WHO Traditional Medicine Global Library (4), a first-of-its-kind digital platform consolidating 1.6 million scientific records on traditional medicine. With advanced features like Evidence Gap Maps and an AI-powered tool, TMGL GPT, the Library will transform access to trusted information and accelerate research worldwide.

The launch of H2I, an initiative to nurture breakthrough ideas that bridge traditional practices with cutting-edge technologies such as AI, genomics and digital health, also attracted significant interest. From over 1000 submissions, 21 finalists were announced at the Summit and will enter a year-long acceleration programme to refine prototypes, receive scientific and regulatory guidance, and connect with policymakers and investors.

## Delhi deceleration on traditional medicine

The *Delhi declaration on traditional medicine* (13) is a landmark agreement by stakeholders on how to advance the implementation of the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034* (1). It was launched during the closing plenary of the Summit, in the presence of H.E. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, and Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of WHO.

This collective pledge focuses on integrating traditional medicine into primary healthcare, strengthening regulation and safety standards, investing in research and building interoperable data systems to track outcomes. It is a shift from recognition to results – ensuring traditional medicine is not a parallel system but a driver of universal health coverage.

### Key commitments of the declaration:

- **Strengthening the evidence base for traditional medicine:** By implementing the WHO Traditional Medicine Research Priorities and Global Roadmap and expanding the WHO Traditional Medicine Global Library.
- **Supporting equitable access to safe and effective traditional medicine through appropriate regulatory mechanisms:** By strengthening coherent governance and regulatory systems for traditional medicine products, practices and practitioners.
- **Integrating safe and effective traditional medicine into health systems:** By using the ICD-11 traditional medicine modules and the International Classification of Health Interventions (ICHI) and developing a minimum data set for traditional medicine.
- **Optimizing cross-sector value through data, collaboration and empowered communities:** By ensuring that community knowledge and scientific evidence jointly inform decision-making processes and exploring collaborative mechanisms such as a global consortium to galvanize investment, innovation and inclusive benefits.



The first page of the *Delhi declaration on traditional medicine*.



# Other high-level events

Traditional medicine gained unprecedented visibility in global political forums in 2025. In addition to the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly, where the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034 (1)*

was adopted, the second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine was reflected in the G20 Declaration launched in November in South Africa, signalling recognition at the highest political levels.

## World Health Summit Regional Meeting 2025

WHO announced the second Global Summit on Traditional Medicine, to be held in December 2025, at the World Health Summit Regional Meeting 2025 (14) in New Delhi, India, on 25 April. A high-level session explored how integrating traditional medicine and biomedicine systems can strengthen equitable, people-centred healthcare. Speakers from government, WHO, academia, industry and

youth groups highlighted the widespread use of traditional medicine, its role in prevention and primary care, and its cultural importance. Strong emphasis was placed on the need for robust evidence, regulation, shared language and research funding to build trust, counter misinformation and support safe integration into national health systems worldwide.

## AI for Good Global Summit

The AI for Good Global Summit (15) is the UN's leading platform on AI to solve global challenges. The Summit ran from 8–11 July 2025 in Geneva, Switzerland, and was organized by the ITU in partnership with over 40 UN agencies and co-convened with the Government of Switzerland. The Summit included a session focused on AI in healthcare and traditional medicine, with keynotes from WHO, ITU and WIPO. The Global Initiative on AI for Health (GI-AI4H) – launched in July 2023 by WHO, ITU and WIPO – used a keynote session to unveil findings from its most recent publication, *Mapping the application of artificial intelligence in traditional medicine: technical brief*, examining the use and future potential of AI in traditional medicine.



The front cover of the *Mapping the application of artificial intelligence in traditional medicine: technical brief*.

“For us at WHO, AI is nothing short of a game changer in public health, in clinical medicine and in maintaining our well-being as individuals.”

– Alain Labrique, Director,  
WHO Department of Digital Health and  
Innovation, at the AI for Good Global Summit

## World Health Summit 2025

For the first time, traditional medicine was a key topic at the annual World Health Summit (16). Two dedicated sessions were included in the event, held in Berlin, Germany on 12–14 October 2025. Both sessions raised the profile of traditional medicine within the global health dialogue, with participants emphasizing the vital contribution of inclusive and holistic care in reimagining people-centred health systems.



Shyama Kuruvilla, Director a.i., Global Traditional Medicine Centre, speaking during the World Health Summit event. © WHO

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*“Communities are our living laboratories.  
We cannot exist without the communities that supply and share their knowledge.”*

**– Professor Motlalepula Matsabisa,**

Director of the Indigenous Knowledge Systems (Health) Lead Programme at the University of the Free State, South Africa, and Co-Chair of the Global Traditional Medicine Centre’s Summit Steering Committee, shared at the World Health Summit how his department bridges traditional and biomedical sciences.

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## 3rd World Congress on Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine



The opening session on 15 October featured a statement on behalf of WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. © WHO

The 3rd World Congress on Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine (17) took place on 15–18 October 2025 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Bringing together researchers, policymakers and practitioners from around the world, the Congress focused on how traditional medicine can contribute to stronger, more equitable global public health systems. The opening session featured a statement on behalf of WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, which underscored the growing role of traditional medicine in improving health equity and resilience. Several WHO representatives joined key panel discussions and keynote presentations on the WHO Traditional Medicine Global Library (4) and *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034* (1).





Dr Ahmed Askeria in his family herbal shop in Cairo, Egypt, which has been open since 1871. © WHO/Heba Taha



# WHO regional achievements

## Regional Office for Africa

The WHO Regional Office for Africa advanced the implementation of the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034* (1) through four strategic events. These events strengthened regional coordination, accelerated the research agenda, and reinforced the quality, safety and regulation of traditional medicine across Member States in the Region.

In September, the Regional Office supported the Regional Expert Advisory Committee on Traditional Medicine (REACT)<sup>1</sup> meeting and research priority-setting consultation in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This regional consultation defined Africa-relevant traditional medicine research priorities and a developed practical roadmap aligned with the global strategy. The meeting contributed to the update and expansion of the REACT mandate and terms of reference, thereby strengthening its advisory role in

traditional medicine policy, research and innovation, regulation, integration into health systems, capacity-building, advocacy, resource mobilization and the protection of traditional knowledge and intellectual property.

The Regional Office also engaged in the IRCH<sup>2</sup> 16th annual meeting in October, hosted by the Indonesian Food and Drug Authority in Jakarta. The meeting reviewed progress and follow-up actions from prior IRCH work and delivered technical workshops focused on safety, regulation, quality control and efficacy of herbal medicines, strengthening regulatory collaboration and experience-sharing relevant to African Region Member States' efforts to improve oversight and patient safety.



The WHO Regional Office for Africa team at the REACT meeting and research priority-setting consultation in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in September 2025. © WHO

<sup>1</sup> REACT in the WHO Africa Region serves as a key body to guide research and development, policies and strategies that promote the safe and effective use of traditional medicine while safeguarding intellectual property, cultural heritage and the health and safety of populations.

<sup>2</sup> IRCH platform supports regulatory convergence and cooperation to safeguard public health and ensure the quality, safety and appropriate use of herbal medicines.





The WHO Regional Office for Africa team at the second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine in December 2025. © WHO

At an interregional workshop on quality and safety of traditional medicine products in Macao SAR, China, in October, the Regional Office for Africa participated under the WHO–Macao cooperation framework. This strengthened African engagement – particularly from Belt and Road Initiative priority countries – on practical approaches to quality assurance, regulatory pathways, research and patient safety for traditional medicine products, contributing to safer use and stronger national regulatory oversight in the African Region.

At the second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine, the Regional Office supported Africa's high-level visibility and engagement, including participation of ministers and senior officials from Cameroon, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius, Sao

Tome and Principe, Seychelles, South Africa, South Sudan and the United Republic of Tanzania. The Regional Office facilitated regional networking and follow-up discussions to advance an Africa Region-led mechanism to support and track country implementation of Summit recommendations.

In 2025, donor support was instrumental in enabling the Regional Office to maintain dedicated coordination capacity and to support Member States' participation in key technical and global coordination meetings, thereby accelerating policy and regulatory discussions, strengthening regional collaboration and advancing practical steps towards safe, quality-assured and evidence-informed traditional medicine.

## Regional Office for the Americas

In 2025, the Regional Office for the Americas supported regional efforts to strengthen the role of traditional medicine within healthcare systems by advancing research prioritization processes. A major milestone this year was the final stage of development and global launch of the WHO Traditional Medicine Global Library, in collaboration with the Latin American and Caribbean Center on Health Sciences Information (BIREME)<sup>3</sup> and the Global Traditional Medicine Centre. These initiatives

aimed to promote evidence-based integration of traditional knowledge into public health policies and services, fostering equitable access and intercultural approaches across the Americas.

In April, BIREME and the Regional Office for the Americas contributed to the regional dialogue on the intersection of science, ancestral knowledge and digital transformation to advance public health. During the "Knowledge for Care" seminar held in

<sup>3</sup> BIREME is a Regional Office for the Americas and WHO entity associated with the Department of Evidence and Intelligence for Action in Health.

Sao Paulo, Brazil, BIREME presented progress on the collaborative development of the WHO Traditional Medicine Global Library.

In June, the Regional Office for the Americas led and supported a regional consultation on research priorities in traditional medicine for the Americas in Sao Paulo, Brazil, bringing together government representatives, experts, academics and Indigenous leaders. The consultation identified evidence gaps and participants agreed on priority research areas to promote the safe, effective and culturally appropriate integration of traditional medicine within healthcare systems. The Regional Office helped define next steps, including mechanisms to protect traditional knowledge, guidance for integration with biomedical systems and the establishment of regional working groups. It also committed to developing a regional strategic plan through dialogue with key stakeholders, with preliminary results presented at the second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine.

The WHO Traditional Medicine Global Library (4) was presented during the regional consultation programme to share updates on its development and gather structured feedback from participants. The event was organized by the Regional Office – through the Department of Health Systems and Services and the Department of Social and Environmental Determinants for Health Equity – in collaboration with BIREME and

the Global Traditional Medicine Centre. The Library was implemented in stages (at the pre-beta phase at that time), using participatory methodologies and digital tools to collect user input. The Regional Office contributed to the development of the platform's first thematic page focused on traditional birth assistance in the Americas, highlighting the importance of valuing and preserving ancestral knowledge that supports maternal and neonatal health as well as community well-being. The full version 1.0 of the Library was launched in December at the second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine.

In 2025, the Regional Office collaborated closely with the WHO Collaborating Centre at Seguro Social de Salud (Peru) to advance the integration of traditional medicine within healthcare systems in the Region of the Americas. This partnership strengthened the Regional Office's capacity to promote culturally responsive, evidence-informed and people-centred health services through the co-development of standardized curricula, technical tools and training programmes on intercultural health, regulatory frameworks and safe traditional medicine practices. The Centre played a key role in compiling regional evidence, designing competency-based learning modules and implementing WHO-validated virtual courses that build intercultural and traditional medicine competencies among health professionals.



Participants at the regional consultation on research priorities in traditional medicine for the Americas in Sao Paulo, Brazil in June.  
© Acervo BIREME/WHO Regional Office for the Americas

## Regional Office for South-East Asia

The year 2025 marked a paradigm shift for traditional medicine in the South-East Asia Region. Through a systematic approach prioritizing institutional collaboration with WHO Collaborating Centres, the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia accelerated the integration of ancient wisdom into an evidence-based model of healthcare.

To move beyond silos, the Regional Office established a multidisciplinary network, involving nine national institutions. Discussions were initiated to merge genomic research with Ayurvedic principles, creating a roadmap for personalized public health. In collaboration with the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine, digital health protocols were explored to ensure medical education and clinical standards are monitored through real-time data analytics. Memoranda of understanding were drafted for joint research and faculty exchanges between the WHO Regional Office and the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences, Ministry of Ayush, Government of India; the National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, India; and the Maharashtra University of Health Sciences, Nashik, India, providing the infrastructure needed for long-term academic sustainability.

A core objective for 2025 was ensuring that traditional medicine data speaks the “global language” of biomedicine healthcare systems. Through regional capacity-building workshops, the Regional Office successfully trained Master Trainers on the coding of Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani diagnostic patterns and morbidity data. This data is now interoperable with WHO’s international classification system, enabling the collection of standardized global health statistics for traditional systems. Meanwhile, the Millets for Noncommunicable Diseases project finalized clinical protocols for using Indigenous grains to combat diabetes and obesity, aligning traditional medicine with global nutrition goals.

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collection practices, ensuring that herbal products meet the same safety standards as biomedicines. Field visits to good manufacturing practice-compliant units provided practical models for scaling quality-controlled production.

The strategic initiatives of 2025 culminated in the second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine. Ahead of the Summit, the Regional Office for South-East Asia provided regional resources for the launch of the WHO traditional medicine Global Library and, in collaboration with the Ministry of Ayush, Government of India, organized a high-level event with more than 50 diplomatic representatives to secure high-level international participation in the Summit. The event brought together Ambassadors, High Commissioners and diplomatic representatives from various countries to brief them on the Summit

agenda, key initiatives and global collaboration opportunities to advance evidence-based traditional medicine. During the Summit, the Regional Office worked closely with the Global Traditional Medicine Centre team and partners to host a high-level Ministerial Roundtable in which 27 country commitments were presented. The Regional Office supported Summit travel arrangements and logistics, including for ministerial delegations.

In 2025, the Regional Office successfully moved traditional medicine from “alternative” to “integral”. The immediate next steps involve the finalization of traditional medicine code sets for ICHI, and the activation of Member States and WHO Collaborating Centres to monitor the implementation of the Delhi declaration on traditional medicine.



A patient at Thammasat University Hospital in Bangkok, Thailand, prepares to undergo an MRI scan as part of her ongoing cancer treatment. She is able to access both Thai traditional medicine and biomedical treatment at the hospital, giving patients more options and fostering cross-disciplinary education. © WHO/Harrison Thane



## Regional Office for Europe

The WHO Regional Office for Europe played a pivotal role in shaping the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034* (1), following on from a series of structured regional consultations in 2024. In response to feedback from the 156th Executive Board, a strategic roadmap was established in February 2025 to ensure all European Member State concerns would be fully integrated. This included a rigorous schedule of further informal and formal consultations in March to refine the final strategy, demonstrating the Regional Office's commitment to ensuring that the global strategy would be both inclusive of regional priorities and technically robust.

As part of a coordinated global effort across all six WHO regions, the Regional Office for Europe also hosted the inaugural regional consultation to establish the Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine Research Roadmap (2025–2034). By synthesizing regional expertise and fostering collaboration between healthcare professionals, researchers and Indigenous representatives, the Regional Office contributed to a unified global research priorities exercise for advancing traditional medicine.

The first Regional Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine Stakeholders Meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark, was a pivotal moment for the European Region. It allowed regulators and experts from Member States to convene in person to identify regional knowledge gaps and address the specific safety and efficacy challenges of the European market. This dialogue ensured that the final global Traditional,

Complementary and Integrative Medicine Research Roadmap reflects the unique regulatory and scientific landscape of the European Region while remaining aligned with global health goals.

During the second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine, European Member States played a central role in shaping the global health agenda by advocating for the integration of traditional practices into formal health systems under rigorous scientific frameworks. Building on the global strategy, European Member States championed a “science-first” approach, ensuring that traditional medicine is incorporated into national primary healthcare through evidence-informed, patient-centred models. Within the high-level dialogues of the Delhi declaration, European delegates specifically drove the agenda for digital health integration, emphasizing the use of AI and big data to validate the safety and clinical outcomes of traditional therapies across the Region.

Throughout 2025, donor support was instrumental in strengthening the Regional Office's technical capacity, directly enabling the leadership and coordination required for these high-level global consultations. This investment allowed the Regional Office to provide enhanced, tailored guidance to Member States and facilitated a robust exchange of best practices between national regulatory authorities. Ultimately, this support ensured that the integration of traditional medicine into health systems across the Region remained grounded in rigorous, evidence-based research and aligned with the strategic milestones achieved this year.



Participants from the first Regional Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine Stakeholders Meeting, held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in September 2025. © WHO

## Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

In 2025, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean significantly advanced its work on traditional medicine, with a strong focus on global policy engagement, regulatory strengthening and regional positioning.

The Regional Office coordinated Eastern Mediterranean inputs to the second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine, including technical content development and structured engagement with Member States. The Regional Office supported countries in identifying key policy messages, case studies and best practices to be showcased at the Summit, ensuring that regional experiences and priorities were reflected in the global dialogue. Priorities included strengthening regulatory frameworks for herbal and traditional products, protecting traditional knowledge, promoting safe integration of traditional medicine into primary healthcare and leveraging digital technologies responsibly. At the same time, countries highlighted persistent challenges, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings, including weak governance structures, limited regulatory capacity, insufficient pharmacovigilance for herbal products, inconsistent quality control and gaps in research and workforce development.

Eastern Mediterranean Region Member States actively contributed to shaping the development and operationalization of the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034 (1)*, ensuring that regional perspectives, especially those of middle-income and crisis-affected countries, were reflected in global implementation priorities. The Regional Office and Member States also participated in the Technical Project Launch Meeting to develop a traditional medicine intervention code set for integration into the ICHI<sup>4</sup>. This engagement will enable countries to review and document national practices in recording traditional medicine interventions, laying the groundwork for improved data standardization, reporting and comparability across the Region.

In October, the Regional Office facilitated the participation of national regulatory authorities from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Egypt and Saudi Arabia in the 16<sup>th</sup> annual IRCH meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia. Interest from additional Eastern Mediterranean Region countries in joining the network signals growing regional commitment to strengthening oversight and advancing regulatory harmonization.



A conference on traditional medicine, titled "Conference on Complementary Medicine in Islamic Civilization: Elements of Integration and Development", organized by Qatar University in Doha, Qatar, 21–22 April 2025. © Qatar University

<sup>4</sup>ICHI is a tool for reporting and analysing health interventions for clinical and statistical purposes. The integration of traditional medicine into ICHI is vital because intervention coding provides a common language for health procedures across different countries and medical systems. By standardizing these codes, healthcare providers can better document, report and analyse the frequency and efficacy of traditional treatments.



In 2025, the Regional Office undertook a comprehensive regional mapping and situation analysis of traditional medicine policies, legal frameworks, regulatory systems, research capacity and institutional arrangements across Member States. This work provided, for the first time, a consolidated regional overview of the policy and regulatory landscape, identifying significant diversity in governance models and levels of system maturity. A dedicated analysis of herbal medicine regulation further highlighted gaps in product registration, quality assurance standards, post-marketing surveillance and enforcement mechanisms. The analysis also identified opportunities for capacity-building, reliance approaches and regional collaboration. Based on these findings, the Regional Office developed a regional framework to leverage traditional medicine to advance health and well-being in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. The

framework provides strategic guidance to Member States on governance, integration into health systems, research and evidence generation, safety monitoring, quality assurance and workforce development, with particular consideration for resource-constrained and emergency settings.

The School of Persian Medicine at Tehran University of Medical Sciences, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Qatar University, Doha, formally expressed interest in acquiring the designation of a WHO Collaborating Centre for traditional medicine research and education development. Both institutions submitted official proposals to the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, marking a crucial step towards establishing regional centres of excellence to support research, training and technical cooperation.

## Regional Office for the Western Pacific

In 2025, the WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific supported Member States in laying the foundation for the sustained implementation of the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034 (1)*.

The revision of national traditional medicine policies in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Papua New Guinea established the foundation for linking traditional medicine with national primary healthcare and universal health coverage. In the Lao People's Democratic

Republic, the National Strategy on Traditional Medicine 2025–2030 was formally endorsed. Meanwhile, in Papua New Guinea, national stakeholder consultations and a rapid assessment of the traditional medicine landscape were conducted to inform the revision of the National Policy on Traditional Medicine. In Pacific Island countries and areas, the Regional Office supported a review of legal and regulatory frameworks related to traditional medicine. In Vanuatu, it supported the revision of the National Medicines Policy.



The expert consultation on research priorities in traditional, complementary and integrative medicine in the Western Pacific Region, in Manila, Philippines, 26–27 February 2025. © Regional Office for the Western Pacific



The Key National Stakeholder Consultation for the update of Papua New Guinea's National Policy on Traditional Medicine, 22–24 April 2025. © Regional Office for the Western Pacific

To strengthen the safety and quality of traditional medicine, the Regional Office supported enhancing laboratory capacity and regulatory ecosystems in Member States through the organization of trainings on testing contaminants in herbal medicines, regional learning exchanges and collaboration with national regulatory authorities. These efforts supported Member States in advancing harmonized standards for the quality and safety of traditional medicine products at the national, subregional and regional levels, and informed the planning of follow-up capacity-building activities aligned with the implementation of the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034* (1).

In the area of Indigenous knowledge and biodiversity, experiences from Malaysia and the Philippines informed discussions on the preservation of traditional knowledge and the assurance of and pathways for institutionalization. These efforts emphasized the importance of culturally sensitive approaches and long-term trust-building with Indigenous communities.

The Regional Office provided technical advice tailored to the diverse stages of traditional medicine integration across the Western Pacific Region and strengthened regional collaboration. An expert consultation on

research priorities in traditional, complementary and integrative medicine, held in Manila, the Philippines, in February, identified priority research areas to support primary healthcare strengthening and informed regional inputs into the Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine Research Roadmap (2025–2034). A total of 19 traditional medicine experts, from 11 Member States, attended the consultation as WHO temporary advisers. The research priorities identified for the Region included the safety, quality and effectiveness of traditional medicine integration, as well as its potential or demonstrated comparative advantage over other health interventions.

In addition, progress was made towards establishing a regional electronic dashboard of traditional medicine indicators, improving data availability for policy development.

Building on these efforts, the Regional Office actively contributed to the second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine, facilitating policy dialogue and providing technical and communications support to advance the implementation of the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034* (1).





Traditional medicinal ingredients undergo laboratory testing before entering production. Each ingredient's origin is verified to ensure authenticity. © WHO/Muhd Ikmal Photography

# Priorities and plans for 2026

## Five cross-cutting priorities for 2026 to advance the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034 (1)*

In 2026, the Global Traditional Medicine Centre will focus on a prioritized, high-impact programme of work that responds directly to Member State and partner needs and global gaps to accelerate implementation of the global strategy. Delivery will be driven through the combined, cross-cutting capacities of all Global Traditional Medicine Centre units, in close collaboration with WHO headquarters departments and regional and country offices and partner networks.

Five strategic priorities for the 2026–2027 biennium have been identified. Together, they form a connected programme of work across the four strategic objectives of the global strategy, while strengthening overall leadership, governance, coordination and delivery coherence to achieve its vision and goals.

### Priority I.

#### Evidence-informed traditional medicine choices supported by the Traditional Medicine Global Library and Traditional Medicine Global Data Network

##### Links to Strategic Objective 1: *Strengthen the evidence base for traditional, complementary and integrative medicine (TCIM)*

The Global Traditional Medicine Centre will produce online resources for stakeholders to make evidence-informed choices about traditional medicine.

In 2026, as part of the Evidence-Informed Traditional Medicine Choices initiative, the Centre will conduct Delphi studies on critical appraisal tools, establish baseline knowledge, attitudes and practices in traditional medicine, and coordinate research, data, innovation and communications efforts to combat misinformation and improve support for evidence-informed decision-making.

The WHO Traditional Medicine Global Library (4) will continue to grow the number of records from 1.6 million at the end of 2025 and will be a trusted global reference on safety, efficacy, equitable access and benefit-sharing.

The development of an Intellectual Property framework and toolkit for the protection, regulation and innovation of traditional medicine will support the protection of traditional knowledge, foster responsible innovation and advance equitable benefit-sharing.

**Indicators for success** include adoption of the WHO Traditional Medicine Global Library in national policies, improved health literacy and communication, stronger safety and efficacy standards, and the integration of implementation and health economics evidence into decisions.

## Priority II.

### Advancing fit-for-purpose regulation of herbal medicines: evidence, standards and systems capacity

#### **Links to Strategic Objective 2: *Support the provision of safe and effective TCIM through appropriate regulatory mechanisms***

The Global Traditional Medicine Centre will produce global standards and benchmarking tools to support Member States in strengthening regulatory frameworks to assure quality, efficacy and consumer safety of traditional medicine herbal products.

In 2026, the Centre will define regulatory benchmarks for herbal products, supporting

national and international regulatory authorities to improve product quality and safety, and enable responsible market access, assuring public safety and trust. This includes developing the International Herbal Pharmacopoeia as well as a model framework for herbal medicines to guide regulatory considerations within existing WHO Global Benchmarking Tools.

**Indicators for success** include peer validation, regulatory uptake commitments, improved quality and safety systems strengthening.

## Priority III.

### Traditional medicine clinical guidance and systems integration with workforce, quality of care and capacity-building for primary healthcare and universal health coverage

#### **Links to Strategic Objective 3: *Integrate safe and effective TCIM into health systems***

The Global Traditional Medicine Centre will establish global standards for the level of evidence to be applied to traditional medicine, as well as promote efficacy and consumer safety through the first-ever development of evidence-based traditional medicine clinical guidelines. This work will be accelerated by a new global network of clinical centres for data collection and monitoring, and the responsible use of AI to accelerate evidence generation. Three “test case” guidelines will be developed on: acupuncture to combat chronic pain, including migraines; traditional medicine greens and vitamin C fruit formulations to address anaemia; and traditional

medicine mind–body practices to strengthen mental health and well-being.

**Indicators for success** include WHO guidance adopted by Member States, a functioning AI-enabled global data network, safety, effectiveness and cost-informed decision-making.





# IV.

## Priority IV.

### Multistakeholder partnerships and third WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine (2027)

#### Links to Strategic Objective 4: *Optimize the cross-sector value of TCIM and empower communities*

The Global Traditional Medicine Centre will convene its third biennial Global Summit on traditional medicine to accelerate the implementation of the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034 (1)* through multistakeholder partnerships. The Summit will support cross-sector policy coherence and accelerate collective action on traditional medicine.

In 2026, the Centre will establish the foundations for the 2027 Summit, including host country arrangements, governance structures, thematic focus and technical programming, ensuring the Summit functions as a catalyst for coordinated delivery of the global strategy, tracking progress and amplification through aligned advocacy, action and accountability.

The indicators for success for Priority IV include global participation, advancing the traditional medicine agenda, commitments, media reach and delivery alignment.

# V.

## Priority V.

### Country leadership and global cooperation

#### Overarching leadership and governance for the *Global traditional medicine strategy (1)*, aligned with the vision and mission of the Global Traditional Medicine Centre

The Global Traditional Medicine Centre will advance global cooperation mechanisms to support countries to implement the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034 (1)*, translating global commitments into practical implementation support, shared learning and

coordinated action. This priority ensures stronger coordination on traditional medicine across WHO, Member States and partners, which no single entity could achieve alone.

The action plan for this priority includes providing practical country support tools; strengthening regional and global cooperation, through a global consortium with regional and topical hubs; and aligning investments to country needs and global strategic opportunities.

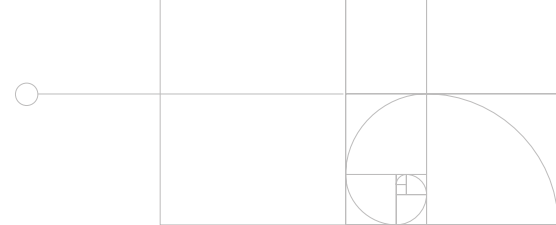




Laboratory Technician Mahlet at work at Aklilu Lemma Institute of Pathobiology in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The institute both investigates Ethiopian medicinal plants and conducts wider biomedical research on infectious and vector-borne diseases affecting communities across the country. © WHO/Abi Girma Tsigie



# Conclusion



In 2025, the Global Traditional Medicine Centre entered a defining phase in its evolution, moving from agenda-setting and strategy to implementation and impact. Building on the institutional foundations laid in its formative years, the Centre delivered across all of its implementation pillars. The adoption of the *Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034* (1) anchored a unified global vision for traditional medicine, while the successful convening of the second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine inspired unprecedented political, scientific and public engagement. The launch of the WHO Traditional Medicine Global Library, a research roadmap, new regulatory and systems integration tools, and the establishment of the first Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine collectively expanded the Centre's reach. Together, these milestones

strengthened the Global Traditional Medicine Centre's position as a global leader in advancing traditional medicine knowledge through partnership, thereby enhancing the contribution of traditional medicine to the health and well-being of all people and the planet.

Looking ahead to 2026, the Global Traditional Medicine Centre is well positioned to consolidate this progress through a focused programme of work. With growing demand from Member States, expanding partnerships and continued investment in research, digital transformation and sustainability, the foundations laid in 2025 provide a strong platform for advancing safe, effective and equitable traditional medicine. This momentum will enable the Centre to deepen its contribution to resilient health systems, culturally grounded care and planetary well-being.



Abelino, a sixth-generation Kallawayaya healer from Cochabamba, Bolivia, and his wife Elena cut and prepare medicinal plants. Abelino tends to patients using more than 200 Andean plants. © WHO/Souleyman Messalti

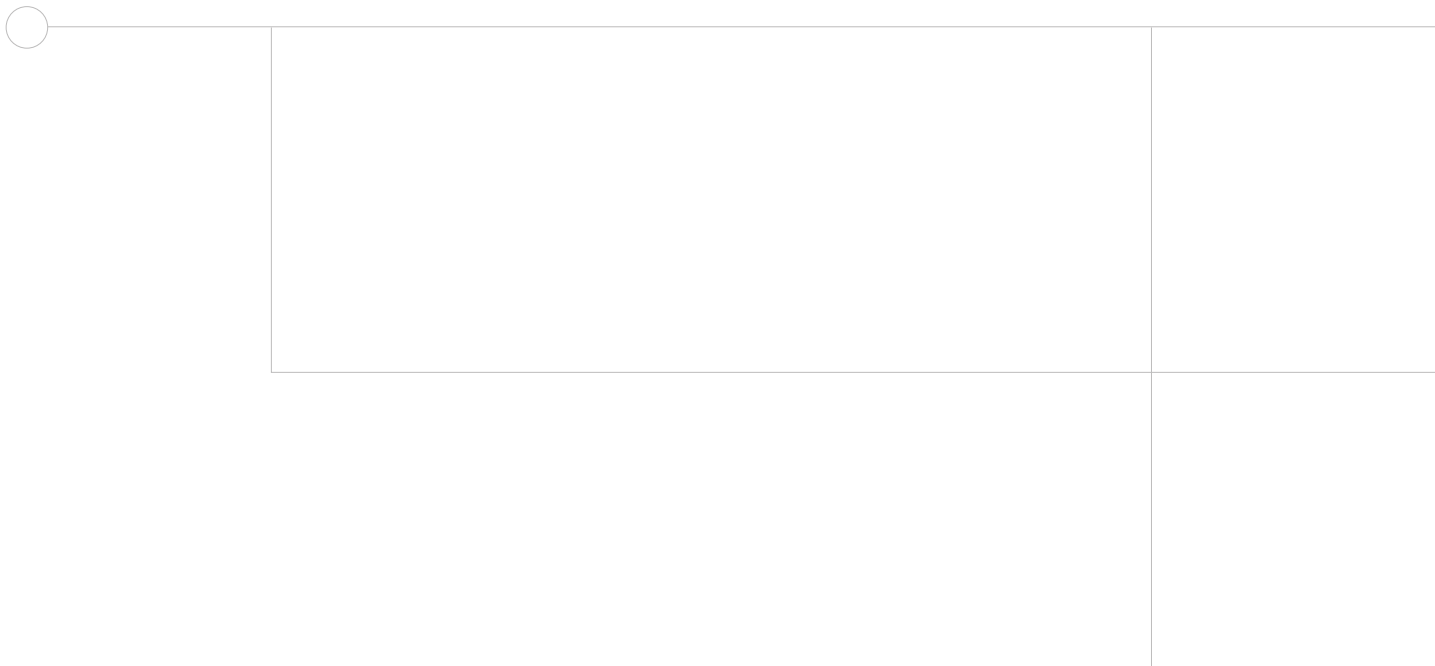


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# Annex: Global Traditional Medicine Centre budget 2024–2025

## Related planned biennial budget (2024–2025)

| Budget line                                                               | Amount (US\$)     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Leadership                                                             | 1 157 238         |
| 2. Global Summit on Traditional Medicine                                  | 3 000 000         |
| 3. Traditional medicine research and evidence                             | 1 000 000         |
| 4. Traditional medicine primary health care and universal health coverage | 1 000 000         |
| 5. Traditional medicine Indigenous knowledges and biodiversity            | 1 000 000         |
| 6. Traditional medicine digital health applications                       | 1 000 000         |
| 7. Traditional medicine operations and management                         | 1 032 500         |
| 8. Monitoring and evaluation                                              | 254 923           |
| Human resource and salary costs                                           | 5 599 587         |
| <i>WHO programme support costs @ 13%</i>                                  | <i>1 955 752</i>  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                                              | <b>17 000 000</b> |

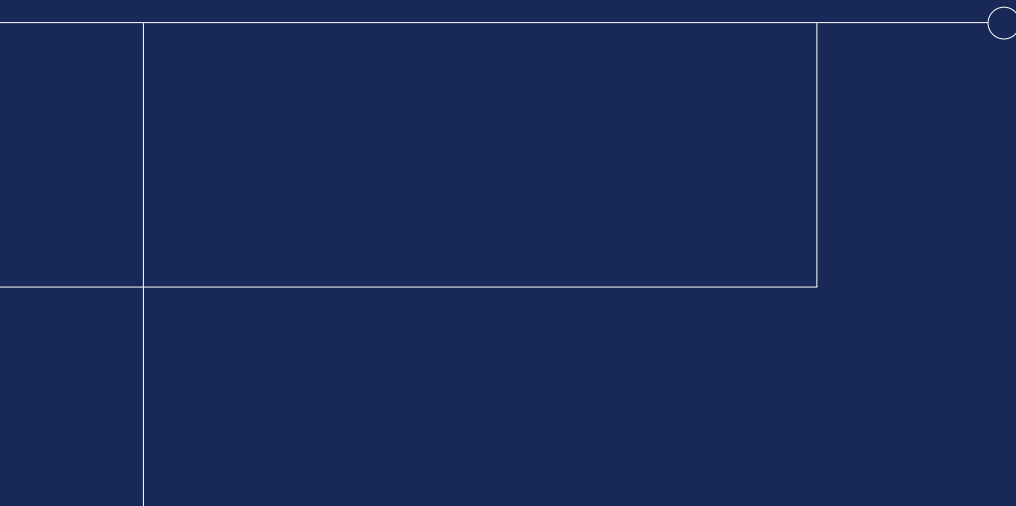
## 2024–25 Financial management report (as of 31 January 2026)

| Revenue as per agreement                    | Amount (US\$)    |
|---------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Revenue receipts in cash for 2024           | 8 500 000        |
| Revenue receipts in cash for 2025           | 8 500 000        |
| <b>Utilization</b>                          |                  |
| Total utilization                           | 14 834 242       |
| <i>WHO programme support costs @ (13%)</i>  | <i>1 814 224</i> |
| Total utilization + programme support costs | 16 648 466       |
| <b>Balance remaining</b>                    | <b>351 534</b>   |





Rosa Valencia Santiago, a teacher at the Escuela de Medicina Tradicional Totonaca, Mexico, in the school's garden of healing plants. The school, part of the UNESCO-recognized Center for Indigenous Arts, teaches young Totonac healers through experiential learning rooted in ancestral wisdom. © WHO/Irene Barajas



World Health Organization

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